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ABSTRACT

Policy and planning concerning the minority languages of immigrants are discussed, focusing on three countries receiving many immigrants: England, France, and Germany. First, similarities and differences in the immigration histories of the three countries, and in their policies concerning education of immigrants, are examined. Then policy implementation in each country is described separately. These descriptions address the evolution of public policy, circumstances of specific immigrant groups and languages, and curriculum design. It is concluded that although in England and France the most important languages of origin are fully integrated into the modern foreign languages curriculum, their structure is not similar to that of traditional foreign language programs, and this integration does not appear to contribute to the prestige of the languages of origin. However, some progress is seen in curriculum and materials development and in-service teacher training in all three countries. Further efforts are seen as necessary for adequate language education. A brief bibliography is included. (MSE)

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Languages of immigrants as modern foreign languages

A comparative view of the education systems of England, France and (Western) Germany

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1. Introducing the question

The different forms of minority education throughout history are a result of minority - majority - interaction, determined by positions of power and conflicting interests. What makes it intricate is the fact that there are - beyond the interest of maintaining or improving one's own position - contradictory motives on both sides. On the one hand side minority parents do wish to transmit the language and culture of origin to their children, but they also aim at social success for them, and in order to attain it are willing to accept assimilatory education. On the other hand side the national school systems naturally serve the interests of the majority and surely are inclined to follow the majority parents' wishes, i.e. they protect majority children from competition by either subjecting minority pupils to assimilatory treatment or by withdrawing them from ordinary classes. But national school systems also have to follow more general public interests and are subject to political control, i.e. they are also bound to protect society from disruptions caused by intolerable unequality or by irreconcilable conflicts of subcultural values.

A lot of minority education history can be regarded as search for reconciliation of the contradictory motives, on both sides, which leads sometimes to rather surprising coalitions. To our view this is true for both the education of "resident" minorities and second generation immigrants.

Mainstreaming the teaching of the languages of origin (the "immigrant languages") is a relatively recent phenomenon. Within it's scope teaching the languages as part of the modern foreign languages curriculum seems to be a very promising attempt, allowing for minority language transmission and for the natural wish of parents to see their children succeed in the ordinary education system as well as for the tendency of the system to adjust to societal changes without being forced to change itself too much.

In European countries of immigration this form of teaching has gained ground since about 1980. It was strongly advocated by British educationalists and policy makers who were

afraid of any form of withdrawal and segregation[1], it was less discussed in France[2], and passed rather unnoticed in Western Germany. Nowhere it found real opposition.

Now, after more than a decade, it might be time to ask the question whether or to which extent the expectations raised by that new form of language teaching are fulfilled.

Our paper deals with outcomes on the macro-level and emphasizes what has been done on the part of the "receiving" educational systems. It relies on official texts and statistics, on national research findings and on expert interviews and school visits carried out during the school year 1991/92[3].

2. Comparing the systems

2.1 The background: similarities and differences

There are remarkable similarities in the history of immigration of the three countries compared. In each of them labour-immigration started or restarted after the second world war, reaching its highest point by 1970, followed by big flows of family immigration, which led to durable settlement and the establishment of new minority communities in the 1980ies. Refugee immigration reached a considerable size during the 1980ies and is still going on despite administrative and legal keep-away-measures.
Differences do exist with regard to immigrants' origins. The post-colonial character of immigration in Britain and France differs from the South European immigration and the immigration of Eastern European people claiming German extraction in Germany. Britain has attracted speakers of Indian languages and Creole speakers from the Caribbean, France received speakers of Portuguese and Arabic, Germany speakers of Turkish, of Romance languages and of Slavonic languages. There are also differences in the legal status of immigrants; Commonwealth Civic Rights for most of them in Britain, naturalization of the second generation in France, permanent foreigner status in Germany, with the exception of the Eastern European Aussiedler[4].

More similarities than differences are to be found in the educational debates which accompanied the immigration process: initial concern with the acquisition of the national language of the immigration country, followed by the exploration of linguistic and cultural origin as an important factor in education, and in a third stage the taking into consideration of the multicultural and multilingual character of society as a whole[5]. Finally more general issues

(antiracism, education for citizenship, human rights education, European dimension in education) have come to the fore and in a way absorbed the former multicultural debate.

The languages of origin, however, remained an intricate issue and were dealt with by the education systems in changing and different ways. Supplementary teaching is the most common pattern, but it has rather different appearances in the three countries compared. In Britain the immigrant communities themselves are supposed to take care of language maintenance teaching, and indeed immigrant organizations have accepted the challenge. In British maintained schools only the multilingualism of the society (and not the individual bilingualism) is seen as an educationally meaningful factor, and on this base alone minority languages are included into primary classroom work ("linguistic diversity"). - In France the languages of origin are taught on the basis of bilateral conventions, within French school buildings, by teachers sent by certain countries of origin, paid by their governments, and following the guide-lines of the sending countries. For smaller language groups there are no conventions, so that their languages have to be taught completely outside school. - Germany follows a similar pattern: the national languages of countries which officially were "sending countries of guest-workers" are taught on a bilateral basis, the other languages have to be cared for by immigrant organizations. But in contrast to France, some Länder, like North Rhine-Westphalia or Hesse, took own responsibility by employing and paying the salaries of teachers, by providing syllabuses and teaching materials, while other Länder, like Baden-Württemberg and the city states of Bremen, Hamburg and Berlin, followed the French pattern entirely[6].

No one of these countries seems to be fully satisfied by its own policy, especially there has been a tendency towards more integration. Mainstreaming the teaching of the languages of origin at secondary level is a most interesting part of it.

The implementation of this form of teaching in each of the three countries will be considered in the following paragraphs. It has to be borne in mind that teaching the languages of origin at secondary schools is only one feature of teaching the languages of origin and that its relative value varies from country to country.

2.2 England

England led the way. Due to the fact that schools and Local Education Authorities were autonomous with regard to curriculum decisions, a gradual movement could develop. A first

instance of Urdu teaching is mentioned as early as 1961. Gradually, where higher proportions of immigrant pupils were to be found, more languages could be added, and by 1980 the movement gained some momentum on national level. The semi-official Swann report of 1985 strongly advocated the integration of "ethnic minority community languages" into the curricula of secondary schools, thus avoiding separate provision for community languages as such; the participation of monolingual English students became a token of the universalistic character of that kind of teaching[7]. The movement spread out. In a 1987 inquiry community language teaching at secondary schools is to be found in 20 (out of 65) LEAs[8]. In 1988 the Education Reform Act introduces the obligation for all secondary pupils to study "a modern foreign language", with no specification as to which languages may be chosen, leaving that to an Order of the Secretary of State[9]. In the following years the government tries to introduce a distinction between European and non-European languages, the latter comprising the most important "languages of origin". But since this was felt to be discriminating against the languages of the immigrants, a heavy debate arose, and the intention was given up. The final and unique list of languages now encompasses languages like Urdu, Punjabi, Gujerati, Bengali, and Turkish. The "languages of origin" are officially and nationally recognized as "modern foreign languages" with full rights. They can be proposed in secondary and final examinations.

Thus far the general regulations. On syllabus level - as a consequence of the general regulations - no distinction is made as to whether a student starts learning a language, which is really foreign to him or her, or whether he or she has already some knowledge or speaking ability or even formal education in the language. Questions of cultural identity are left out of the National Curriculum of modern foreign languages[10]. The same holds true with regard to the examination requirements of the General Certificate of Secondary Education and other public examination schemes.

Of course, this may not be precisely what minorities aim at. But one has to say that regardless of the official texts a reasonable teaching practice has developed, where teachers do take into account the specific linguistic and cultural background of their students and in most cases do not teach the home languages of bilingual pupils as though they were foreign languages to them. Quite often pupils during primary school age attend community run courses and continue studying the language at school on secondary level, in order to pass the general examinations, even though no formal link is acknowledged between community courses and state school provision.

It is true that the examination schemes do affect the teaching practice. It is true also that there are some rare cases of monolingual English kids following lessons of immigrant languages (and of course this is a very welcome fact). But happily enough, this does not change the general pattern which, in practice, can be characterized as language maintenance teaching.

Normally a high proportion of bilingual students of a certain language community is needed to lead the school to introduce this language into its curriculum, so that there is few or no provision for locally less represented language groups. But where the offer is made, normally a very high percentage of bilingual students attend the respective language classes. Rivalry from the part of French as a foreign language does exist, but some schools try to avoid or to minimalize it (others don't), and the well grounded expectation of good GCSE- or A-level marks is a good incentive to choose the language of origin instead of other subject matters.

2.3 France

A general secondary school reform in the early seventies which included a diversification of foreign language learning was at the beginning of the development in France. By this reform Portuguese and Arabic, amongst other languages, have been introduced. The migrant unit of the Ministry of Education very quickly discovered that this created a new opportunity for migrant children's education. In 1973 they recommended that, if possible, migrant children should choose the language of origin as their first foreign language. Special attention was drawn to the teaching of Portuguese, which by that way became the first "language of origin" in French secondary schools[11].

Arabic and Portuguese, as well as Italian and Spanish of course, can be proposed in secondary and in final examinations ("baccalauréat"). In final examinations it's also possible to propose other immigrant or minority languages, such as Vietnamese, Wolouf or Croatian etc. which are not taught at schools.

In principle there is a clear regulation to avoid competition: France requires from the Embassies of the sending countries not to open supplementary courses in places where French state schools offer classes of the languages concerned[12]. But there are private suppliers who cannot be controled that way.

A recent development is still worth mentioning: A new foreign language will be introduced, and this time really because of immigration. It's Turkish which will start its carrier as a "modern foreign language" in France in the school year 1992/93.

The valid syllabuses for secondary schools date from 1985. They make it quite clear that the languages are regarded as foreign languages for monolingual French students, starting at zero and following a rather formal language learning progression. At least the eventuality is mentioned that there might be bilingual students in the classroom. teachers are advised to take care of it[13].

In reality most of the students in Portuguese classes and virtually all students in Arabic classes are of Portuguese or Arabic extraction. The teachers (by legal obligation of French nationality, but in many cases with an immigrant background) are reasonable enough to neglect the syllabus and to follow more adequate ways. Appropriate teaching materials are coming into being.

Nevertheless, attendance is rather poor. A bit more than 10 % (15 % at most) of Portuguese pupils in French secondary schools follow the Portuguese teaching there, and less than 5 % of the Arabic pupils attend the Arabic lessons. The reason is almost certainly the competition with English. There are a lot of Portuguese families who enrol their children in private Portuguese courses, pay the costs, and let them learn English, maths and sciences in the French schools, but Portuguese outside.

2.4 Germany

The Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education of the German Länder decided on a recommendation to introduce languages of origin "in the place of" the first or a second foreign language in secondary schools in 1979[14]. Since then theoretically in each Land such language classes can be opened, but in fact the Länder make little use of this possibility[15]. Five of them offer nothing at all. Baden-Württemberg now has a pilot project "Turkish instead of English" at Hauptschulen which is a rather questionable idea. The city states of Hamburg and Bremen in a few schools offer Turkish in the place of the first foreign language which at least leaves open the possibility to choose English as a second foreign language. Bavaria offers Turkish as an option at some Realschulen. Only North Rhine-Westphalia and Berlin are worth a more detailed description:

Berlin, a place of mainly Turkish immigration, is one of the Länder where the languages of origin in the suppiementary classes are taught under the responsibility of the foreign embassies, not of the German government. Over the years, a mutual animosity arose between the Turkish and the German education authorities. In the end, the Germans decided to open up their own Turkish teaching business and they could do it without contravening the bilateral conventions by introducing Turkish in the place of the first or a second foreign language. Turkish secondary teachers were employed by the Berlin Senate, Turkish teaching materials were developed in a quite modern European spirit, in-service training courses were held and a syllabus has been established[16]. Since three years Turkish can be proposed in the final examination ("Abitur").

The result is rather disappointing. Only 14 % of Turkish secondary pupils in Berlin attend the Senate's Turkish language classes, most of them choose it in the place of the second foreign language. So, again, competition from English might be the main reason[17], its effect being reinforced, most probably, by the competition from the Embassy's courses which of course continue to work.

Things are more peaceful in North Rhine-Westphalia, where the supplementary courses are under German responsibility. There Turkish and Greek are offered in the place of a second foreign language, and can be proposed in final examinations. A syllabus for Turkish has been issued, teaching materials and in-service training opportunities are available. Again, attendance is rather weak. 2,2 % of the Turkish and 1,1 % of the Greek secondary pupils follow the language classes in secondary schools, mostly Comprehensive schools, some 20 Gymnasien, and a few Realschulen. No need to repeat the main explanation, but it should be stressed additionally, that North Rhine-Westphalia has a very high attendance of supplementary courses and a highly developed curriculum, due to a strong commitment of the government to "mother tongue teaching"[18].

3. Conclusions

To which extent can and do the existing regulations fulfil the requirements of language maintenance, of school success and of integration into the system in a balanced way?

(1) Though in England and France the most important languages of origin are fully integrated into the modern foreign languages curriculum, they are not "self-sufficient" bits of the curriculum in the sense attribuable to the "ordinary" foreign langua-

ges. De facto the maintenance interest causes a deformation of the official form. There is a silent division of labour between community run courses and state school provision in England, there is some continuity between supplementary classes in primary schools and secondary language classes in France. The existing balance between integration and maintenance interests is paid for with hypocritical syllabuses, so to speak, which are not in line with the teaching practice. The system is bound to save its face. - In Germany no full integration exists. In secondary schools, too, the languages of origin are offered for "foreign" students only, like a prolongation or just another form of supplementary classes. This, of course, makes it easy to supply more appropriate syllabuses and to pursue maintenance purposes. To formulate it the other way round, a plus of specificity is paid for with a minus of real integration.

(2) Theoretically a high degree of integration should correspond to increased formal educational value: Learning the language of origin should contribute most to school success where it is recognized as a first language, less where it serves only as a second language or an optional subject. But this correspondence suffers from the competition with the more prestigious languages. It is heavily damaged in France and Germany by the competition with English, far less so in England by the competition with French. A relatively balanced solution is only possible where the curriculum makes it possible to study at least two languages.

(3) In all the three countries, there has been considerable progress in syllabus development, in material production, and (in England and Germany, at least) in in-service training. Secondary teachers nowadays can be in a position to teach languages of origin in a way that is adopted to the living conditions of their pupils both linguistically and culturally, and thus contribute to a living development of these languages.

All in all, mainstreaming the teaching of the languages of origin at secondary schools has been a step forward. Not a very big step, to be honest. It suffers from fundamental ambiguities and from lack of continuity. The attempt to balance language maintenance and school success still requires additional efforts from children and youngsters. Language education at secondary schools still has to develop in order to become fair language education for all.

Notes

1. As the Swann report stresses it: 'We find we cannot support the arguments put forward for the introduction of programmes of bilingual education in maintained schools in this country. Similarly we would regard mother tongue maintenance, although an important educational function, as best achieved within the ethnic minority communities themselves rather than within mainstream schools, but with considerable support from and liaison with the latter. We are however wholeheartedly in favour of the teaching of ethnic minority community languages, within the languages curriculum of maintained secondary schools, open to all pupils whether ethnic minority or ethnic majority..... It is clear that both bilingual education and mother tongue maintenance can only be of relevance to mother tongue speakers of languages other than English, ie to pupils from certain ethnic minority groups. Where such provision has been made therefore it has inevitably meant that ethnic minority pupils have had to be separated from their peers for "special" teaching. As we have stressed throughout this report, we are opposed in principle to the withdrawal of ethnic minority pupils as an identifiable group and to the concept of "separate" provision.' (Education for All 1985, p. 406)

2. See Berque (1985, p. 32f); Une politique... 1991; L'enseignement... (1992).

3. The visits were granted by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft within the research programme "Folgen der Arbeitsmigration für Bildung und Erziehung".

4. For comparative descriptions see Just/Groth (1985); L'Europe et ses immigrés (1990).

5. This seems to be a nearly universal pattern, cf. Lynch (1986, p. 40-54); Todd (1991, p. 35-55); Wittek (1991, p. 1-3), and in a wider perspective Clyne (1991, p. 24 f).

6. For more details see Tansley (1986, ch. 1); Bourne (1989, ch. 5 and 6); Boulot/-Boizon-Fradet (1987); IREMAM (1989); Rixius/Thürmann (1987).

7. See Education for All (1985), ch. 7.3: Mother Tongue Provision.

8. Bourne (1989), p. 116.

9. Education Reform § 3 (2) (b).

10. Unless one assumes the following passage (in its widest sense) to leave a loophole: "Attainment targets and programmes of study for modern foreign languages contribute to cross-curricular themes, including environmental education, economic and industrial understanding and citizenship. The NCC has published guidance on each of these themes. The attainment targets and programmes of study also contribute to the European dimension in the curriculum (where a European language is being studied) by developping pupils' sensitivity to the culture (in its widest sense) of the communities whose languages are being studied" (DES 1991, § 21).

11. Circular No. 73-383 of 25 September 1973: "Partout où ce sera possible, pour les enfants dont la langue nationale peut être enseignée en 6e comme première langue étrangère, on pourra envisager l'ouverture d'un enseignement de cette langue; un effort particulier devra être fait pour l'enseignement du portugais, langue pour laquelle la demande est importante" (reprinted in: questions - réponses... 1976, p. 161 f.).

12. Circular No. 77-345 of 28 September 1977: "Des cours de langues et de civilisations nationales pourront être ouverts dans des collèges sur la demande des autorités du pays en cause et grâce à des enseignants mis par elles à la disposition des collèges, à l'intention des seuls élèves étrangers de la langue considérée. Toutefois, il conviendra, au préalable, d'être assuré qu'il n'existe aucune possibilité de dispenser à ces enfants un enseignement de leur langue dans le cadre des cours normalement dispensés dans les collèges."
A "Note de service" No. 83-165 of 13 April 1983 states more precisely that a minimum number of 20 students is required, and that the normal program of modern foreign languages must not be modified because of these specific offers.

13. Ministère de l'Education Nationale (1985): "L'enseignement du portugais aux élèves d'origine portugaise tient compte des acquis et des attentes qui leur sont propres. A l'entrée au collège, le niveau des connaissances et les motivations de ces élèves peuvent varier considérablement. Les outils et les techniques pédagogiques doivent être assez souples pour pouvoir s'adapter à des situations d'enseignement variables et complexes" (p. 210). - Similar remarks on Arabic, ibid. p. 129 f. Italian and Spanish are exclusively regarded as foreign languages for French students.

14. Abänderung der Neufassung der Empfehlungen der Kultusministerkonferenz "Unterricht für Kinder ausländischer Arbeitnehmer", Beschluß vom 26.10.1979, § 4.3: "Die an den weiterführenden Schulen übliche Sprachenfolge gilt grundsätzlich auch für ausländische Schüler, und zwar insbesondere für diejenigen, die von Anfang an eine deutsche Schule besuchen. Sofern es jedoch im Sinne des Absatzes 4.1 im Interesse des ausländischen Schülers erforderlich ist und es die organisatorischen, curricularen und personellen Voraussetzungen zulassen, kann in der weiterführenden Schule Unterricht in der Muttersprache anstelle einer Pflichtfremdsprache angeboten werden." - This recommendation was taken over by the single governments of the Länder during the following years (Landesinstitut... 1981, p. A 1/45).

15. For more details see Rixius/Thürmann 1987, p. 88-108; Heer 1988; Gogolin/Tullnay 1988.

16. For a more detailed description see Jungmann 1991.

17. Preibusch/Kröner (1987, p. 27 f) found in their study that pupils who choose English (and not Turkish) as a foreign language in the fifth grade had better test cores both in German and in Turkish than those who choose Turkish.

18. See also Böcker/Thürmann 1991, p. 75 and 78 f.

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